



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Division of Health Care Quality
99 Chauncy Street, 11th Floor, Boston, MA 02111

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

JOHN W. POLANOWICZ
SECRETARY

CHERYL BARTLETT, RN
COMMISSIONER

Tel: 617-753-8000
www.mass.gov/dph

Circular Letter: DHCQ 13-10-603

TO: Acute Care Hospital Chief Executive Officers

FROM: Madeleine Biondolillo, MD *MB*
Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: October 31, 2013

RE: Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel at Massachusetts Acute Care Hospitals for the 2013-2014 Influenza Season

Background

As a condition of licensure, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regulations require all licensed healthcare facilities to:

- Offer free-of charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel (full and part-time employees, contracted employees, volunteers, house staff and students);
- Document receipt of influenza vaccine administered within and outside the facility or document the declination of immunization.
- Report information to MDPH documenting compliance with the vaccination requirement, in accordance with reporting and data collection guidelines of the Commissioner (105 CMR 130.325(I)).¹

Vaccination of healthcare personnel (HCP) has been shown to reduce influenza infection and absenteeism among HCP, protect patients and lead to reduced disease burden and healthcare costs.

During the 2012-2013 influenza season MDPH established performance goals for acute care hospital HCP vaccination rates - - an average 90% influenza vaccination rate for all acute care hospital personnel with no facility reporting a rate less than 86%. 23 facilities (30%) vaccinated 90% or more of their HCP, however the state as a whole did not achieve a vaccination coverage rate of 90%. Only 47% of acute care hospitals (n=36) reached the minimum established benchmark of vaccinating 86% or more of their HCP.

MDPH is committed to promoting continuous quality improvement and recommends you share your hospital's vaccination rates internally with all staff, your Board of Directors, and your Patient and Family Advisory Council. The Healthcare Personnel Vaccination data for the 2012-2013 season is available at the following link under the heading "Announcements".

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/hcq/healthcare-quality/>

¹105 CMR 130.325, 105 CMR 140.150, 105 CMR 150.002(D)(8) available at www.mass.gov/dph.

Continuing to increase the rate of influenza vaccination coverage among HCP will only be achieved with significant commitment and effort. To protect the lives and welfare of patients, employees, and communities, as well as to improve quality and reduce healthcare costs, MDPH encourages all hospitals to implement an evidence-based vaccination initiative to achieve the established goal of vaccinating 90% of eligible HCP.

Reporting Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Data

MDPH will continue to require all acute care hospitals to report HCP influenza vaccination data using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Reporting HCP influenza vaccination to NHSN also meets the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirement for facilities participating in the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program.

Reporting Changes for the 2013 – 2014 Influenza Season

NHSN has revised the HCP module methodology. Beginning with the 2013-2014 influenza season, acute care hospitals must report summary data on influenza vaccination of HCP who physically work in the reporting facility for one day or more from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014. This is a change from the 2012-2013 influenza season in which summary vaccination data were reported for HCP physically working 30 days or more in the reporting facility.

Change in MDPH Data Submission Deadline

For purposes of administrative simplification, MDPH has aligned the deadline for submission of HCP influenza summary data with the CMS deadline.

All HCP influenza data must be entered into NHSN by May 15, 2014.

The NHSN protocol, training, reporting forms, survey and instructions are available on the NHSN website at the following link: <http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/acute-care-hospital/hcp-vaccination/index.html>

Please forward this circular letter to all persons in your healthcare facility responsible for infection prevention, employee health, and quality management reporting including but not limited to: Infection Preventionists, Occupational Health Professionals, Chief Nursing Officers, Directors of Quality Improvement, and Directors of Human Resources.

Seasonal influenza vaccination is an effective method of preventing influenza virus infection and its potentially serious complications. MDPH is dedicated to working with you to ensure that patients and personnel are protected. Thank you for your ongoing participation in this important initiative. Please submit questions concerning the reporting and data submission requirements to the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us

CC: Acute Care Hospital Infection Preventionists
Acute Care Hospital Occupational Health Professionals
Cheryl Bartlett, RN, Commissioner
Alfred DeMaria, Jr., MD, Bureau of Infectious Diseases